

04-157

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to announce a change in procedures for requesting duty-free entry of goods into the United States. This note supercedes part of the guidance in a previously issued diplomatic circular note No. 02-281, dated January 1, 2003. The Department of State looks to the diplomatic missions to bring the contents of this note to the attention of all their personnel, both in Washington and at the respective consular missions throughout the United States.

The procedure to be clarified in this note applies solely to the duty-free importation or purchase of alcoholic beverages and other consumables to be used for official entertainment purposes by foreign missions, consular offices, and designated international organizations. The Department requires these entities to submit form DS-1504, "Request for Customs Clearance of Merchandise," to perform this action. Under prior guidance, missions were obligated to indicate the name of an individual accredited by the Department of State, along with their

personal identification number, for the request to be processed. This will no longer be necessary.

The Department's policy with respect to the duty-free importation of alcoholic beverages and other consumables to be used for official entertainment purposes now holds that such shipments may be consigned to the mission, consular office, or designated international organization. To indicate this on the form DS-1504, missions may now select the box marked 'official' in the Purpose section of the form when filing for duty-free importation of this type of merchandise. In addition, the mission, consular office, or designated international organization must indicate the date and type of official function for which the alcoholic beverages are being purchased.

The Department reminds the Chiefs of Mission that the policy regarding duty-free importation of alcoholic beverages and other consumables to be used for personal purposes remains unchanged. Individual consignees and their personal identification numbers are still required for this action.

Department of State,

Washington.

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